

Message Text

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PAGE 01 ADDIS 00164 070929Z

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ACTION AF-06

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O R 070827Z JAN 75

FM AMEMBASSY ADDIS ABABA

TO AMEMBASSY KHARTOUM IMMEDIATE

INFO AMCONSUL ASMARA

SECSTATE WASHDC 2553

CONFIDENTIAL ADDIS ABABA 0164

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR PINS PINT ET SU

SUBJ: SUDANESE REQUEST FOR INFO ON ETHIOPIAN DEVELOPMENTS

REF: STATE 1560; KHARTOUM'S 0037 (NOTAL)

1. EMBASSY HAS LITTLE TO ADD TO DEPARTMENT'S COMMENTS AND ADDIS' RECENT REPORTING, NOTABLY ON ERITREAN DEVELOPMENTS OF PARTICULAR INTEREST TO SUDANESE.

2. REGARDING APPOINTMENT OF NEW ETHIOPIAN MOD AYALEW, WE WOULD SPECULATE THAT TWO CONSIDERATIONS MAY HAVE WEIGHED PARTICULARLY IN HIS FAVOR: (A) "DIRG" MAY HAVE FELT THAT YOUNGISH CIVILIAN APPOINTED TO THIS KEY POSITION (WHICH HAD LONG BEEN CHASSE GUARDEE' OF SENIOR ETHIOPIAN MILITARY OFFICERS) WOULD GIVE IT ("DIRG") FREER HAND RUN ARMED FORCES TO SUIT ITSELF; AND (B) AYALEW PARTICULARLY WELL SUITED BECAUSE OF HIS EXTENSIVE KNOWLEDGE OF SOMALIA WHERE HE HAD SERVED AS ETHIOPIA'S AMBASSADOR FOR FIVE YEARS. NO DOUBT ALSO WEIGHING IN BALANCE WAS AYALEW'S PROMPT RETURN TO ADDIS (UNLIKE A NUMBER OF OTHER ETHIOPIAN CHIEFS OF MISSION) AND HIS EXTENSIVE EFFORTS ONCE BACK HERE TO GIVE NEW AUTHORITIES BENEFIT HIS WIDE KNOWLEDGE AND EXPERIENCE, FOR EXAMPLE ON SOMALI EQUIVALENT (WHICH GOING CONCERN) OF ETHIOPIA'S PROJECTED DEVELOPMENT THROUGH COOPERATION CAMPAIGN. AYALEW'S CONFIDENTIAL

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PAGE 02 ADDIS 00164 070929Z

RELATIONSHIP WITH PROMINENT PERSONALITIES UNDER DETENTION, ON

OTHER HAND, NOT EXTRAORDINARY. WE THINK THERE ARE SEVERAL "DIRG" MEMBERS WHO HAVE RELATIVES BEHIND BARS. IF ANYTHING, PREVALENCE OF HOSTAGE-GUARANTOR CONCEPT HERE MAY HAVE OPERATED TO ENHANCE "DIRG'S" SENSE OF CONTROL OVER AYALEW.

3. WE THINK, FINALLY, THAT "DIRG" CONTINUES TO VALUE ETHIOPIA'S GOOD RELATIONS WITH SUDAN. WE READ PUBLICATION HERE OF EPMG'S FULSOME MESSAGE OF CONGRATULATIONS TO PRESIDENT NIMEIRY ON OCCASION SUDAN'S NATIONAL DAY, AS REFLECTIVE OF THIS REALITY. IT REMAINS TO BE SEEN, OF COURSE, WHETHER "DIRG" CAN ACHIEVE CONSENSUS ON CONCESSIONS LIKELY ENGAGE ERITREAN INSURGENTS IN SERIOUS NEGOTIATIONS BUT RECORD OF RECENT EVENTS CERTAINLY SEEMS TO SUPPORT OUR FEELING THAT PRESSURE OF REALITIES INCLUDING PROMINENTLY ATTITUDE OF KEY NEIGHBORING STATES SUCH AS SUDAN HAS LED "DIRG" AT LEAST FOR NOW TO RECONSIDER STRAIGHT MILITARY APPROACH TO ERITREAN CONUNDRUM TO WHICH IT APPEARED TO BE WEDDED FEW SHORT WEEKS AGO.

4. THERE WERE ABOUT DOZEN AS YET UNEXPLAINED (CEREMONIAL?) DETONATIONS IN ADDIS (DURING CURFEW) AT ABOUT 0300 LOCAL JANUARY 7, ETHIOPIAN CHRISTMAS DAY. IF THESE PROVE MALIGN AND RELATED TO ERITREAN PROBLEM -- ATTITUDES COULD CHANGE AGAIN.
WYMAN

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